

# Study Guide and Commentary ACIM® Text, Chapter 7, Section III The Reality of the Kingdom

## Legend for Text paragraphs:

blue text = Material from ACIM 3rd edition (FIP)  
**bold blue text** = words emphasized in all caps in Urtext  
red text = alternate or omitted material from the Urtext  
light blue text = editorial comments  
~~striketrough blue text~~ = Not in Urtext, in FIP edition

[For some reason, several paragraphs of interesting material that follow this section were deleted when these sections were edited for the published edition. They are included in an Appendix below.]

You may want to skim over Section II again before continuing to study Section III, since there are clear links between them. As you recall, in Section II we saw the Holy Spirit as the great Translator, Who translates the law of the Kingdom into a form applicable to this world. In particular, He translates the law of mind, “What you extend you are,” into an earthly form, “What you project you believe.” He translates so as to *preserve and convey* the original meaning, not to preserve the form at the expense of the content. Our heavenly function of creating thus appears in this world as the function of healing. The section ended by pointing out that, in the Kingdom, you share and extend one meaning with God, and no translation is needed because there is no conflict.

Section III, “The Reality of the Kingdom,” focuses on what is eternally true about us, or the permanent reality of our nature as God created us.

## Paragraph 1

1. The Holy Spirit teaches one lesson, and applies it to **all** individuals in **all** situations. Being conflict-free, He maximizes **all** efforts and all results. By teaching the power of the Kingdom of God Himself, He teaches you that **all power is yours**. Its application does not matter. It is **always** maximal. Your vigilance does **not** establish it as yours, but it **does** enable you to use it **always** and in **all ways**. When I said “[Behold] I am with you always,” I meant it literally. I am not absent to **anyone in any** situation. **9**Because I am always with you, **you** are the way, the truth and the light.<sup>1</sup> **10**You did not make this power, any more than I did. It was created to **be** shared, and therefore

<sup>1</sup> John 14:6 says, “the way, the truth, and the **life**,” but the Urtext and even the Notes all use the word “light” instead of “life.” This may simply be a mistake on Helen’s part.

cannot be meaningfully perceived as **belonging** to anyone **at the expense** of another.  
Such a perception makes it meaningless by eliminating or overlooking its real and **only** meaning.

• **Study Question** •

1. *Here Jesus tells us that he is quite literally with every single person in every situation (1:7–8). What is the first thought that comes into your mind upon reading that statement?*

Carrying on with the general theme of the previous section, this paragraph begins by speaking of the “one lesson” that the Holy Spirit teaches, applying it even-handedly “to all individuals in all situations” (1:1). The one lesson He always teaches is the truth about what you are: “... the inestimable worth of every Son of God...” (T-7.VII.7:2–3). By the way, if you noticed the reference on that quotation, it is from Section VII of this same chapter. This general theme—that the Holy Spirit is constantly and consistently reminding us of our true identity and value as God’s creations, counteracting the lies of the ego about what we are—runs all through the chapter.

Here in Section III, the lesson is spoken of in the form of “the power of the Kingdom” (1:3), emphasizing that *we have* all power as partakers of the Kingdom. Think for a moment of what that means *for you*. The Holy Spirit is teaching you that you, along with every individual, have *all power* in all situations. Think of some situation that concerns you right now, and mentally affirm to yourself, “I have all the power of the Kingdom of God with me in this situation.”

We need to start expecting miracles! As startling as it sounds to say, “I have all power,” it is simply a restatement of some of the basic miracle principles from Chapter 1. It does not matter how the power is applied, “It is always maximal” (1:4–5, as stated in the first principle of miracles:

There is no order of difficulty in miracles. One is not "harder" or "bigger" than another. They are all the same. All expressions of love are maximal. (T-1.I.1:1–4)

Using different words, this chapter is simply urging us to expect miracles, to expect to see the power of God applied *maximally* to every situation we are involved with. This may not seem to have anything to do with *mental vigilance*, which has been a running theme since the end of Chapter 6, going back even to Chapter 4, Section IV, but it does.

Vigilance does not *make* God’s power yours, because God made His power yours in creation. What vigilance *does*, however, is to enable you to make complete and thorough *use* of that power (1:6). (I like the play on the words “always” and “in all ways” in that sentence.) If you do not reject the ego’s propaganda in your mind you will doubt the presence of that power. You need to be watchful to prevent the ego’s slander against you from taking root, and to open your spiritual ears to the Voice of the Holy Spirit, Who proclaims the power of the Kingdom *for you*. You can remind yourself, “My Father gives all power unto me” (W-pII.320.Title). That lesson suggests we pray like this:

Your Will can do all things in me, and then extend to all the world as well through me. There is no limit on Your Will. And so all power has been given to Your Son.

(W-pII.320.2:1-3)

Sometimes I recall my experience with Pentecostal Christian churches and the enthusiasm with which they claim the power of God, and ask to see it working in their lives. Perhaps we may judge some of what they do as superficial, but I think we can learn from their fervor and faith. What would happen to you if you spent ten minutes meditating on the line, “My Father gives all power unto me”? Wouldn’t you get just a little bit excited? I know I would! I know I *do*! Read these other references to get a sense of how often, and how strongly, the Course presents this truth: T-7.VII.11:6; T-8.II.7:7; T-14.XI.2:4; W-pI.20.3:6-7; and especially W-pI.191.9:1-3, which says:

You who perceive yourself as weak and frail, with futile hopes and devastated dreams, born but to die, to weep and suffer pain, hear this: All power is given unto you in earth and Heaven. There is nothing that you cannot do.

Jesus reminds us of his promise, in the Gospels, that he would always be with us (1:7, quoting Matthew 20:28). He says he meant it *literally*, and then gives us a wonderful paraphrase: “I am not absent to anyone in any situation” (1:8). I understand this to mean that, as the Christ, He (I use the capital letter to indicate “Christ” and not just the man, Jesus) is with me as God’s representative, wielding God’s power along with me. What this means to me is that we have the presence of Christ with us in every situation; He is never absent. He is, as the psalmist put it, “...a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1, KJV). The psalmist clearly sees the benefits of such a Presence:

Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

[Though] the waters thereof roar [and] be troubled, [though] the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. (Psalm 46:2-3, KJV)

Speaking of the “city of God,” the psalmist adds: “God [is] in the midst of her; she shall not be moved” (Psalm 46:5, KJV). Basically, if we latch on to this promise and take it *literally*, as intended, we can say, “Let all hell break loose; it won’t shake *me*, because I have the power of His Presence with me.” Our vigilance can assist us by constantly reminding us of this fact.

Christ’s presence with us makes *us* “the way, the truth and the light” (1:9, see footnote). That is a remarkable statement because it refers to a saying of Jesus in the Gospels (“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6)), a saying that is often quoted by fundamentalist Christians to “prove” that the only way to come to God is through the mediation of Jesus and his “atoning death” on the Cross. Here in the Course, we have Jesus telling us that *we* are “the way, the truth and the life” for the very reason that he is with us! In other words, like Jesus, we are the means by which God manifests in the world. We are the means through which God brings salvation to the world. We are the conduit of His healing power. We are those through Whom the Holy Spirit speaks to the world and teaches the truth. We are the reality of His creation, the resurrecting life that can raise minds caught in death back to life again. Through you, and through me, God extends Himself to the world.

Jesus goes on to say that, although we *share* this power with him, we didn’t make it any more than he did (1:10-11). It does not belong exclusively to Jesus, and certainly not to us, and it *cannot even be meaningfully perceived* that way, because it is a power that was “created to be

shared” (1:11). If we see this power as residing in him alone, or *in anyone* at the expense of another, we have rendered it meaningless, because *sharing is its meaning* (1:12). The message is always, “No one is excluded from the Kingdom of God.”

## Paragraph 2

2. 1God’s **meaning** waits in the Kingdom, because that is where He placed it. 2It does **not** wait in time. 3It merely **rests** in the Kingdom because it **belongs** there, as **you** do. 4How can you who **are** God’s meaning perceive yourself as absent **from** it? 5You can see yourself as separated **from** your meaning only by **experiencing yourself as unreal**. 6This is **why** the ego is insane; it teaches that you are **not** what you **are**. 7That is so contradictory it is clearly impossible. 8It is therefore a lesson you **cannot really learn**, and therefore **cannot really teach**. 9Yet you **are** always teaching. 10You **must**, therefore, be teaching **something else** [*as well*], even though the ego **does not know what it is**. 11The ego, then, **is** always being undone, and **does** suspect your motives. 12Your mind **cannot** be unified in allegiance to the ego, because the mind does **not** belong to it. 13Yet what is “treacherous” to the ego **is** faithful to peace. 14The ego’s “enemy” is therefore **your** friend.

### • Study Question •

2. *When the Course says that perceiving yourself as separated from your meaning involves experiencing yourself as unreal (2:5), what specifically is it talking about? What particular experiences, emotions or attitudes do you think constitute seeing yourself as unreal?*

The previous paragraph referred to the “real and only meaning” of the power of God that has been given to us all (1:12). That meaning, we are now told, “waits in the Kingdom” where God put it (2:1). The creative power that resides in us is a *shared* power; it loses its meaning when you attempt to consider yourself as a separate individual rather than a part of that Kingdom. The meaning of that power is not waiting in the sense of *waiting in time* because time does not contain it; the power “waits” in the sense that it rests and resides in the Kingdom, just as you do (2:2–3). This is waiting in the sense of the Bible’s admonition to “Wait on the Lord” (Psalm 27:14). It is a resting, a settling in. You may be seeing yourself as separated from the Kingdom and therefore absent from the power of God, but that power still abides in the Kingdom, and when you have reclaimed your citizenship, the power will still be yours. It “waits” for you in that sense—it abides, it *awaits* your use of it.

You *are* the meaning of God and of His creative power! You are His expression, His extension, the fruit of that creative power; how can you possibly be separated from a power that is the essence of your being? (2:4). In the Text, Jesus compares this colossal misperception of yourself to a sunbeam thinking it has become separated from the sun (T-18.VIII). To make this even *seem* possible, we have been forced to experience ourselves as “unreal” (2:5).

To get a more concrete picture of how insane this is, suppose you knew someone who was perfectly healthy and had a million dollars, and yet who insisted he could not walk and was impoverished. You can see that his legs are healthy and strong, yet he refuses to stand up and

walk. You can call his bank and get a bank balance of over a million, and yet he insists he cannot even afford food, and eats garbage. Wouldn't you say he was insane?

That is nothing, however, compared to what you and I have done, and what we are *still doing*. As God's Son we are the "radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of His nature" (Heb. 1:3, ESV); all His creative power is in us. Yet, we live like prisoners of time and space. We believe ourselves to be bodies. To be guilty. To be separate individuals. *What the ego wants us to believe about ourselves is insane*. It teaches us that we are not what we are (2:6), which is a contradiction in terms! (2:7).

The good news in all of this is that the ego's lesson is so incredibly insane and so evidently impossible that *we can't really learn it!* (2:8). Thank God for that! We have expended superhuman effort in *trying* to learn it, however (T-31.I.2:7-3:6), so that it may seem to us that we *have* learned it, and that learning the lesson of the Holy Spirit is impossible. The contrary is true; the ego's lesson is impossible, and the Holy Spirit's is inevitable. Our minds cannot give one hundred percent allegiance to the ego because they do not belong to the ego (2:12); some part of our minds remains "faithful to peace" (2:13).

You have not been able to learn the ego's lesson *entirely*. Therefore, because you "are always teaching" what you believe (2:9), some part of your mind is still, continuously, *teaching* the truth about you. The ego, however, doesn't know *what* this "something else" *is* that is being taught (2:10). All it knows is that *something* is opposing it. This is why, in an ironic twist, the ego suspects your motives; some part of your mind is constantly undermining (or undoing) the ego (2:11). The ego sees this part of the mind as its enemy, but in truth, this part is your friend (2:14).

It's funny how we let a suspicion of ego motivation blacken our entire soul. One selfish thought seems to spoil a multitude of benevolent thoughts. Why doesn't it work the other way? Why can't we see that if there is one *unselfish* thought in our minds, it must prove we are not the sinners the ego wants us to think we are? The ego knows that, and it bugs the ego something terrible!

### Paragraph 3

3. I said before that the ego's friend is not part of you, because the ego perceives itself [Ur: as] at war and therefore in need of allies. **2**You who are **not** at war must look for brothers and **recognize** all whom you see as brothers, because **only equals are at peace**. **3**Because God's equal Sons have everything, they **cannot** compete. **4**Yet if they perceive **any** of their brothers as anything **other** than their perfect equals, the **idea** of competition **has** entered their minds. **5**Do not underestimate your need to be vigilant **against** this idea, because **all** your conflicts come **from** it. **6**It **is** the belief that conflicting interests are possible, and therefore you have accepted the **impossible** as true. **7**Is that different from saying you perceive **yourself** as unreal?

#### • Study Question •

3. *What is the idea or belief that causes all your conflicts and that you must be vigilant against?*

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While your friend, referred to in the last paragraph, is the Holy Spirit in your mind, do you

recall what the Course calls “the ego’s friend” (3:1)? The phrase first came up in Chapter 6, in a passage that, like the last paragraph, was discussing how the ego believes that part of the mind is “against it”:

Perceiving something alien to itself in your mind, the ego turns to the body as its ally, because the body is *not* part of you. This makes the body the ego's friend.(T-6.IV.4:5–6)

The body, then, is what the phrase “the ego’s friend” refers to. The body is not part of you. It is the ego’s ally, recruited by the ego because it thinks it is at war and in need of allies (3:1). You, by contrast, are “not at war.” Instead of looking for *allies*, then, you need to “look for brothers” in everyone you see (3:2). “Brothers” implies “equals,” so this is saying that we should see one another as *equal brothers* who share, rather than compete. This whole chapter, in its discussion of the Kingdom, keeps coming back to this theme: We are part of one another, we share all things with one another, we create with one another, and even our true being *is* one another.

Competition is the idea of separation squared. In competition, not only do you have separate individuals, but you have them at war, fighting over the ownership of something that can be possessed only by one of them, like boxers fighting for the championship, or Olympic athletes for the Gold Medal. Because God’s Sons are equal, they all have everything; therefore, they *cannot compete* (3:3). If, however, any one of us perceives our brothers as “anything other than [our] perfect equals” (3:4), the idea of competition enters in. If you and I are not equal, then conflicting interests are possible. What benefits you may bring harm to me, and vice versa. If we are perfectly equal, however, whatever benefits one of us benefits both; there is no competition and no reason for it.

If I stop and think for a moment, I will realize that I *rarely* see *anyone* as my “perfect equal.” I’m always seeing myself as better than, or worse than, the other people I interact with. You may be an introvert who hides her feelings; I may be an extrovert who broadcasts them too freely. I will probably consider my way of being better than yours and judge you as inferior to me because of your reticence. You will probably think of me as loud-mouthed or shameless. When we elevate our differences in our minds, we cannot avoid conflict. I will be trying to *open* you up and you will be trying to *shut* me up. And that is just *one* area of competition.

“All your conflicts,” the Course tells us, come from the idea of competition (3:5). We are in danger of underestimating the destructive power of this idea in our lives, in part because seeing inequality seems so natural, and seeing one another as perfect equals seems—well, “quaint” to say the least, and “witless” might be closer to how our minds react to the idea. Time spent pondering the destructive nature of the idea of competition will be repaid richly as we learn to be vigilant *against* this particular notion of the ego. Watch your mind, and see how frequently the idea of “conflicting interests” (3:6) arises.

Conflicting interests, the Course points out, are as impossible as your being unreal (3:7). If, as the Course insists, “. . . the separation never occurred” (T-6.II.10:7), how can *anything* conflict with *anything*? There is only one Thing! There is only one of “us” here. We *are* the Kingdom. That is the nature of what we are. If, then, we are seeing conflicting interests, we must be seeing our brothers and ourselves as what we are *not*. We must not be perceiving truly.

## Paragraph 4



4. 1To be **in** the Kingdom is merely to focus your full attention **on** it. 2As long as you believe you can **attend** to what is **not** true, you are accepting conflict as your **choice**. 3**Is it really a choice?** 4It **seems** to be, but seeming and reality are hardly the same. 5You who **are** the Kingdom are not concerned with seeming. 6Reality is yours because you **are** reality. 7This is how having and being are ultimately reconciled, not in the Kingdom, but **in your mind** [Ur: minds]. 8The altar there is the **only** reality. 9The altar is **perfectly** clear in thought [Ur: It is perfectly clear in its thought], because it is a reflection of **perfect** Thought. 10Your right mind [Ur: It {the altar}] **sees** only brothers, because it sees **only** in its own light.

• **Study Question** •

4. *How does the first sentence relate to the practice of mental vigilance?*

If my goal is to be “in the Kingdom,” I need to learn to “focus [my] full attention on it,” because that *focus* is what being in the Kingdom *is* (4:1). This means excluding every other thought from my mind, such as the idea of competition or the thought of conflict and attack. I cannot be competitive if I am not “attending” (paying attention) “to what is not true,” that is, to separate identities with conflicting interests (4:2). If, however, I *do* pay attention to conflicting interests, I am *choosing conflict*.

Try to imagine living without any concept of conflicting interests! It isn’t easy to imagine. Try to imagine operating with no concept that someone has to lose for you to gain, or that your brother’s gain means your loss.

Jesus raises an interesting question: *Is conflict really a choice?* (4:3). Apparently, he does not think so. He admits that it *seems* to be a choice, “but seeming and reality are hardly the same” (4:4). Conflict is only an *illusion* of choice; in reality, conflict is impossible. As he pointed out in 3:6, conflicting interests are impossible. If the separation never occurred, there are no separate beings who can be in conflict! There is just one mind that imagines parts of itself to be separate beings with separate interests. If I attack something that *seems* to be separate from me, I am really attacking a part of myself. If I take something from what seems to be “another person,” their loss is my loss.

We *are* the Kingdom (4:5), not separate beings. We are one, not many; we cannot be concerned with what we might *seem* to be, only with what we are. We *are* reality and so we *have* reality—all of it. Having and being are ultimately reconciled *in our minds* (which is the only place they have ever been out of accord anyhow) as we learn to overlook the seeming separateness that we see, and to recognize instead, beneath it all, the underlying unity (4:7). At the altar of our minds (our right mind, where the Holy Spirit dwells), that is all we see, and that altar is our only reality. When our right mind has come to be our *only* mind, and we no longer perceive enemies or competitors, but only brothers (4:10), we will have arrived +in the Kingdom.

## Paragraph 5

5. <sup>1</sup>God has lit your mind [Ur: minds] Himself, and keeps your mind lit **by** His Light because His Light is **what your mind is** [Ur: minds are]. <sup>2</sup>This is **totally** beyond

question, and when you question it you **are** answered [Ur: **when you questioned it you were answered**]. <sup>3</sup>The Answer [Ur: **answer**] merely **undoes** the question by establishing the fact that to **question** reality is to question **meaninglessly**. <sup>4</sup>That is why the Holy Spirit **never** questions. <sup>5</sup>His sole function is to **undo** the questionable and thus **lead to certainty**. <sup>6</sup>The certain are perfectly calm, because they are not in doubt. <sup>7</sup>They do **not** raise questions, because **nothing questionable enters their minds**. <sup>8</sup>This holds them in perfect serenity, because this is what they **share, knowing** what they are.

### • Study Question •

5. *What happens to you when you question reality as God created it? (Deduce it from its opposite: what happens when you are certain.)*

The ultimate Answer is already in your mind because God put it there when He created (“lit”, 5:1) that mind. Your mind *is* the light of God so it must *have* the light of God (5:1).

If you are like me, you have a little difficulty accepting the idea that “His light is *what your mind is*” (5:1). Far too often, my mind seems *devoid* of God’s light and filled with very unheavenly thoughts. Yet, the Course tells me that the identity of my mind and God’s light is “*totally beyond question*” (5:2).

Does that mean that if we question it, we’re bad? Hardly! We might think a sentence that begins, “When you question it...” would end with words like “you’re being an idiot!” or “you will be severely punished.” Instead, that sentence ends with: “...you are answered” (5:2). You question, you get answered. No big deal! You don’t get attacked for questioning, but your question *does* get undone. As I understand it, that means that the Holy Spirit shows us that the question is meaningless (5:3) by pointing out that questioning reality is futile. Reality is reality. The Holy Spirit does not question (5:4); He undoes questions (5:5).

The ego’s mental stance, and ours to begin with, is filled with doubt and uncertainty about our identity. We may not realize to what extent our self-perception is comprised of *questions* rather than certainty, but a little examination of our thought patterns will make it plain. Part of the vigilance we must exercise is watchfulness against thoughts that question the presence of God’s light within our minds—thoughts that disparage our minds, depreciate their power, diminish their intelligence, or denigrate their holiness.

When our minds are in tune with the Holy Spirit they are certain, and certainty brings with it calmness (5:6). Uncertainty is a sure source of uneasiness; the very word, “uncertain,” carries with it the taint of anxiety. So when we are certain, we are sure, and we are free from anxiety. Our minds are not troubled with meaningless questions (5:7). With the serenity of certain identity, we can share that certainty *because we know what we are!* (5:8).

In the end, we will all have that utter certainty of knowledge. In the meantime, I think, we can all experience at least moments of such inner certainty, and it is those moments in which the Holy Spirit extends His miracles through us. To foster such moments, and to advance toward that final certainty, when we notice thoughts full of self-doubt and self-questioning, we need to question the questions, or to “deny the denial” (T-12.II.8:7) of who and what we are.



## Answer Key

1. This is a personal question, and answers will vary. But try to notice the general nature of your response. Are you *glad* that Jesus is with you in every situation, or are there some situations in which you'd rather he would not be around?
2. Insecurity, feelings of impermanence, insubstantiality, fear, emptiness, depression, purposelessness, meaninglessness, lack, being unloved, being unloving, etc. Experiencing yourself as unreal, in my opinion, includes all of these things. At the core, it simply means any way in which we believe that we “are not what [we] are” (2:6); in other words, any sense in which we believe that we are *not* God’s “holy Son, forever innocent, forever loving and forever loved, as limitless as your Creator, and completely changeless and forever pure” (W-pII.10.5:1).
3. The idea of competition is the source of all our conflicts (3:4–5). This is the same as a belief in “conflicting interests” (3:6). We are asked not to “underestimate [our] need to be vigilant against this idea” (3:5).
4. Focusing my full attention on the Kingdom, or seeing only the truth and not perceiving illusions, is my goal. To have a mind so focused is what it means to be “in the Kingdom.” To reach that focus, I must become vigilant against every thought that is opposed to the Kingdom, which includes thoughts such as the idea of competition.
5. You lose your certainty, serenity and calm, but your question is answered at once by an Answer that undoes the question.

## Appendix: Passage from Urtext that comes between Sections II and III

[Note: I have changed ALL CAPS to *italics* to make for easier reading. My comments are indented.]

To heal is to liberate totally. We once said there is no order in miracles because they are all *maximal expressions of love*. This has no range at all. The non-maximal only *appears* to have a range. This is because it *seems* to be meaningful to measure it *from* the maximum and identify its position by *how much it is not there*. Actually, this does not mean *anything*. It is like negative numbers in that the concept can be used theoretically, but it has *no* application practically. It is true that if you put three apples on the table and then took them *away*, the three apples are *not there*. But it is *not* true that the table is now *minus* three apples. If there is *nothing* on the table, it does *not* matter what *was* there in terms of amount. The nothing is neither greater nor less because of what is *absent*.

In the phrase, “to heal is to liberate totally,” the intended emphasis is on the word “totally,” as the following sentences, which discuss the appearance of *range* in miracles, clearly shows. There is no such thing as “partial liberation.” If you are partially liberated you are still enslaved; if you are partially healed you are still sick. There is no order in miracles; they are all maximal or total. Jesus points out that the appearance of range comes when we “measure it *from* the maximum and identify its position by *how much it is not there*.” It’s a deluded focus on *lack* instead of on wholeness.

I love the comparison to negative numbers in math. I always thought that negative numbers were such a strange construct. What on earth is “minus two apples”? There is no such thing as a minus apple! As Jesus says, it can be used theoretically but “has *no* application practically.” Nothing is nothing. It does not matter what is absent. You can be minus one flea or minus one elephant; in both cases what you have is nothing.

A healing, in the Course sense, moves us from nothing to everything, from lack to abundance. There is no such thing as a partial healing. Healing means restoring *wholeness*.

That is why “all” and “nothing” are dichotomous, *without a range*. This is perfectly clear in maximal test performance and for *exactly* the reason you emphasize.

This probably refers to some psychological testing Helen was writing about; we can’t be sure what “the reason you emphasize” meant, although the following sentences may give us some idea.

You cannot interpret *at all*, unless you assume either *maximal* motivation or its *complete absence*. Only in these two conditions can you validly *compare* responses, and you *must* assume the former, because if the *latter* is true, the subject *will not do anything*. Given *variable* motivation he *will* do something, but you *cannot understand what it is*.

Apparently in the testing, Helen had stipulated that, in order to interpret the test results, it was necessary to assume “maximal motivation.” If motivation were totally absent, “the subject will not do anything,” so there would be nothing to interpret, and with variable motivation, the results would be inconsistent.

The results of tests are evaluated relatively, assuming maximal motivation. But this is because we are dealing with abilities, where degree of development is meaningful. This does not mean that what ability is used for is necessarily either limited or divided. But one thing is certain. Abilities are potentials for learning, and you will apply them to what you want to learn. Learning is effort, and effort means will.

Just as in evaluating the test results, so in miracles, it is either all or nothing. It comes down to motivation: “Learning is effort, and effort means will.” What seems to produce degrees of healing, I think, is in fact degrees of motivation. If we want love sometimes and other times want the illusory pleasure of selfishness, we will get a mix; when we want only love we will see nothing else (T-12.VII.8:1), because in reality love is all there is.

You will notice that we have used the term abilities as a plural, which is correct. This is because abilities began with the ego, which perceived them as a potential for excelling. This is how the ego *still* perceives them and uses them. It does not want to teach everyone all it has learned, because that would defeat its purpose in learning. Therefore, it does not really learn at all. The Holy Spirit teaches you to use what the ego has made to teach the opposite of what the ego has learned. The kind of learning is as irrelevant as is the particular ability which was applied to the learning.

“A potential for excelling” sounds like a good thing, doesn’t it? But to excel implies competition. The word means “to be exceptionally good” at something, and if you are the exception, you stand above the crowd. You are separate. The ego sees our abilities, particularly our ability to learn, as something that can make us better than others, something it can use to fortify our separateness. The ego wants to keep acquired knowledge to itself; the mind of the spirit wants to extend the knowledge to everyone. Learning that isn’t shared, Jesus says, is “irrelevant.”

You could not have a better example of the Holy Spirits (this) unified purpose than this course. The Holy Spirit has taken very diversified areas of your past learning, and has applied them to a unified curriculum. The fact that this was not the egos reason for learning is totally irrelevant. you made the effort to learn, and the Holy Spirit has a unified goal for all effort. He adapts the egos potentials for excelling to potentials for equalizing. This makes them useless for the egos purpose, but very useful for His.

I love thinking of our various abilities as “potentials for equalizing.” You may have a talent for singing. I may have an ability to teach. Others have the ability to communicate through art, or through story-telling, or writing. Whatever the talent, let it be used “for equalizing.” This is how the Holy Spirit used the various areas of past learning in Helen and Bill and re-purposed them to produce the Course.

If different abilities are applied long enough to one goal, the abilities themselves become unified. This is because they are channelized in one direction, or in one way.

Ultimately, then, they all contribute to one result, and by so doing, their similarity rather than their differences is emphasized. You can excel in many different ways, but you can equalize in one way only. Equality is not a variable state, by definition.

The various abilities we bring to focus on our goal of enlightenment, of unitive consciousness, are gradually transformed by the object of their focus. They become part of the single-mindedness that inspires and uses them, and draws them onward.

That is why we once said that papers will be easy to write when you have learned *this* course. To the ego there appears to be no connection, because the ego is discontinuous. But the Holy Spirit teaches one lesson and applies it to all individuals in all situations. [Section III continues from here.]

How intriguing that the abilities we apply to learning the Course become strengthened even in application to mundane purposes such as writing papers. There seems to be no connection between the two things, but that is only part of our illusion of separation. An ability we utilize in our spiritual pursuits is strengthened and improved in the process, and its enriched power can be utilized in any pursuit that is consonant with our spiritual purpose.

<sup>1</sup> John 14:6 says, “the way, the truth, and the **life**,” but the Urtext and even the Notes all use the word “light” instead of “life.” This may simply be a mistake on Helen’s part.

**Allen Watson’s Commentary on the Text of *A Course in Miracles***

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